

241327Z Aug 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003460

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/PPD, NEA/PPA, NEA/AGS, INR/IZ, INR/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO IZ BAGHDAD

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION;  
BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussions on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on August 23, 2005.  
END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
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1A. "Our Constitution is Between Our Hands"  
(Al-Sabah Newspaper (Independent) in Arabic P 2 Editorial by  
Falah Al-Mish'al)

"Once again Iraqis have succeed in securing their political future, by drafting a national constitution that protects the unity and wellbeing of Iraq. This document favors the people over other sectarian or ethnic allegiances . . . This accomplishment not only effects the current political situation in Iraq, it also represents an Iraqi dream. It is the dream of freedom and civil rights ensured by a permanent constitution. Iraqis have kept that dreams alive through decades full of struggle . . . The document will be available for all Iraqis to read within two months. The Iraqi people will then vote their opinions just like they did during the last election . . . We hope that the same efforts that went into the constitution will be applied to issuing new legislation toward what remains of Saddam's government. These legislations will suit the new lawful democratic state that is born from Constitution. Congratulations go out to everyone for this national accomplishment and for each step toward granting the rights of safety and prosperity for our people."

1B. "Central Iraq"  
(Al-Mashriq Newspaper (Independent, Anti-Coalition) in  
Arabic p. 7 By Shamil Abdul Qader)

"There is a confusion about federalism and its relationship to breaking up Iraq into separate parts. Some Iraqi political groups only consider federalism in relation to the Kurds. It seems that 80% of the Iraqi population do not accept any kind of federalism. They consider it a move toward Iraq's destruction . . . Today, the Iraqi political groups think that it is necessary to establish a central government with the presence of a Kurdish federal territory . . . Some politicians believe that presence of a Kurdish and Arab federal territories will stabilize security in Iraq. Others think that making each province a federal territory with the presence of a central government will disrupt Iraq's unity. I believe that if politicians continue to insist upon the establishment of federal territories we will start to see areas similar to Kurdistan such as Basrahstan, Umarahstan and Nasseriyastan . . . We all know that the British imperialists tried to cut Iraq off from the rest of the world. The Kurds are in a mountainous area. They are like a small Iraq without a shore. Hence, it is impossible to establish a Kurdish state because the land is no more than hills. Israel was successful in establishing its own state because it occupied the Mediterranean seashore."

1C. "Why They are Afraid of Establishing Federalism in the South of Iraq?"  
(Al-Bayyan Newspaper (Affiliated with the Hezbollah Movement

in Iraq) in Arabic P 1 Un-attributed Editorial)

"One day, the late Saudi King Fahad was asked why he asked Washington and London to not support the Shi'ites during their uprising in 1991? He said that he was afraid that the south of Iraq might become a Shi'ite triangle that would extend to all other Arab countries in particular the Gulf States. This speech reminds us of the current objections to establishing federalism in south of Iraq . . . Why do the Iraqi people who live in the south of Iraq suffer from poverty when their areas contain a real wealth? Why they are they always exposed to tyranny, mass killing, humiliation and marginalization? We believe in the unity of Iraq. But, we would like to know why Kurdistan only has the right to federalism when it appears that no other area has that right . . . Some Iraqi groups have started to call us separatist. They don't remember that we were the first citizens who supported Iraq's unity. We lived in poverty and suffered tyranny in a wealthy land. Yet we never stopped supporting Iraq's unity. We are the real advocates of unity and we will support any initiative that will unite the country, fight terror and end starvation."

**1D. "The Constitutional Changing"**

(Baghdad Newspaper (Affiliated with the Iraqi National Accord headed by Iyad Allawi) in Arabic P. 3 Editorial by Jassem Al-Sagher)

"The new democratic process in Iraq is a unique development for the entire Middle East. A civilized Iraqi political government will emerge from the referendum and the coming election. It will be structured according to the principles of equality, harmony, rule of law, and universal participation. These principles are important for supporting the political process . . . Every country needs strong political institutions in order to maintain stability. Backward countries do not have these institutions . . . We are on the right path toward democracy. We began the journey when we received our sovereignty, and then we established the TAL . . . The TAL approves modern democratic principles for Iraq. These principles include the mechanisms of democracy, such as the establishment of the Ministry for Human Rights. Compare our civil society to other countries in the region and you will see that we are more advanced. Our progress is really a civilized jump for our Arab region."

**1E. "The Kurds and the Constitutional Crisis"**

(Al-Fourat Newspaper (Independent, Anti-Coalition) in Arabic Last Page Editorial by Hayan Al-Baghdadi)

"After the first gulf war the American government supported the idea of Kurdistan being outside the control of the Iraqi government . . . The United States did this in order to make friends in the region. They wanted a place where they could launch military and intelligence movements in order to topple the former Iraqi government . . . During this time the Kurds started to form an independent government with a parliament and a military (Peshmergas). They were able to do this because they felt that the Americans were protecting them. They also were free from the centralized authority. This is how Kurdistan became a semi-independent region. They are semi-independent because they need financial and political. This is why they are now arguing over Kirkuk . . . The Iraqis will never let go of Kirkuk. Nor will they agree to let the Kurds have it. It is a Kurdish conspiracy to cut Kirkuk from our unified Iraq for their own special interests. The question is, will the Kurds succeed in forcing their allies to stand with them against the Iraqi will for unity? If they do, they will be cursed by history for the rest of time . . . We can assure the Iraqis that the rest of the Kurds and its national powers in our northern regions reject any idea of separation from mother Iraq . . . Because they know that an independent Kurdistan will be an easy target for their neighbors and there will be no one around to help or save them then."

**1F. "Women and the Freedom of Expression"**

(Al-Mada Newspaper (Communist, Anti-Coalition) in Arabic P. 6 Editorial by Amina Abdul Aziz)

"By the final deadline for the constitution draft we are all expecting a document that will ensure the rights of all Iraqi men and women . . . Since the beginning of this political process there have been demonstrations started in Baghdad from two types of women. The first type has demanded that women have equality with men while the other type has rejected the idea of women having equality with men . . . With full respect to all point views, there is a misunderstanding for the concept of equality. The misunderstanding about women's rights, duties, and equality between men and women, is due to decades long deprivation from expressing free opinions. A significant gap occurred in understanding the real meaning of equality, women's freedom, their sacrifices and suffering-for their patience they deserve practical participation in ruling the country, which suits their ambitions and performance. Equality means full awareness for the important role of women that is ascendant

in the new generation, the new future of Iraq. We should have our rights in being nominated for senior positions in the Iraqi government, to correct what we believe is not right for us and to work toward planning for our new political role in Iraq.

**1G. "Frozen Green Zone People"**  
(Al-Fourat Newspaper (ant-coalition, independent) in Arabic Editorial by Hussain Abdul Abbas Al-Wahili)

"I can assure you that the people in the frozen green zone do not know anything about the change of seasons, they do not know that we are now in summer and the heat in Baghdad is at peak temperature. To prove what I am talking about, they are still wearing suits and jackets with ties; they fasten their jackets and they seem that they are shaking when they appear on TV as if it were still winter. Are they shaking because they are feeling so cold inside the frozen green zone, or are they shaking in fear? . Perhaps it's because they are embarrassed since they have no answers to the many crises we are experiencing regarding the lack of water and power. It's as if electricity divorced all Iraqis. How a thing named electricity completely abandoned Iraqis is a beautiful old story we can tell our children who gather around the lamp at night; it will begin with, 'once upon a time when we enjoyed that lovely element named electricity,' and it will continue with water and which was something we had in the past and it will go on to something else named security. These are our fairy tales now, how to apologize to your neighbor when he abuses your rights and how to stay silent when someone occupies your land. They all live in the green zone. Iraqi government and national assembly members, the ministers and the coalition, and all other employees working with them and that is why they do not know about Iraqis who live outside the green zone and that is why they are leading us with Transparency and Democracy.

**1H. "The Calamity Named the Upcoming Constitution"**  
(Al-Dawa Newspaper (Pro-Government) in Arabic P. 5 Editorial by Hady Jallaow Mariy)

"There are three basic political factions asking for demands, insisting on them, and showing their opposition to it. The first is the Kurds, who dream of a separate province. The second is the Sunnis who want the opposite of the Kurds. The last is the Shia who believe in the necessity of finishing the constitution on time; they also have limitations in what they're willing to relinquish. It's not only politicians who are committed like them, it's the majority of Iraqis who believe in this commitment. At the same time, some factions are calling for the refusal of certain issues in the constitution, which are related to federalism, because they believe it will divide the country. The problem is how will Iraqis convince those with intertwined attitudes about the constitution? Especially since there are wide sectors of the populace still suffering from abuses inflicted by the former regime and its activities. Parliamentary block leaders are responsible for reaching the final accord, and that can be achieved through concessions. The results will be in the interests of the Iraqi people because any more postponement or dissolution of the National Assembly will take Iraq back to the first step, and that sequence will reflect negatively on the Iraqi people, which is dangerous. The Iraqi people are waiting for the results of the upcoming negotiations with anxiety."

Khalilzad